DHP-RESOLVE-001

The Conflict Resolution Protocol

How the DHP resolves conflict without defaulting to power

Luke Doel | DHP Framework | 2025

Abstract

Every governance framework faces a final boss problem: what happens when two groups both claim to be acting in the name of reducing harm but choose incompatible paths? In every existing system, this conflict resolves through power — the group with more force, more money, or more institutional authority wins. The harm claim becomes a narrative weapon rather than an evidence-based position.

The Dynamic Harm Principle requires a different mechanism. If harm is measured rather than narrated, and if the Truth Mesh is the arbiter of harm claims, then conflict between harm claims must also be resolved through the Truth Mesh — not through power. This paper specifies that mechanism: three automated filters that, applied in sequence, produce a deterministic resolution to any conflict between competing harm claims. No king required. No voting. No might-makes-right. Just the filters running on the evidence.

This is the final piece of the DHP architecture. With DHP-RESOLVE-001 in place, the framework is complete.

I. The Problem — When Harm Claims Collide

1.1 The fundamental conflict scenario

Two groups. Both claim to be acting to reduce harm. Both have real constituencies whose wellbeing they are representing. Both have evidence — or claim to. They choose incompatible paths. Only one path can be taken. How does the DHP decide?

This is not a hypothetical. It is the structure of every significant political, ethical, and social conflict in human history. Pro-life versus pro-choice. Lockdown versus liberty during a pandemic. Industrial development versus environmental protection. Vaccine mandates versus bodily autonomy. In every case, both sides frame their position as harm reduction. In every case, the resolution defaults to power — whoever controls the institutions, the money, or the force of arms, wins.

The DHP cannot accept this default. A framework that claims to resolve conflict through evidence but then hands the tie-breaker to power has simply created a more sophisticated justification for the same old outcome. The framework must specify a tie-breaker that is independent of power.

1.2 Why existing frameworks fail

Democratic majority vote fails because majorities can impose harm on minorities. The majority once voted to maintain slavery. The majority once voted to criminalise homosexuality. Majority preference is not a harm measurement — it is a power measurement dressed as legitimacy.

Legal authority fails for the same reason. Laws are written by the powerful. Legal authority is a codified record of which groups had sufficient power to encode their preferences as binding rules. It is not an independent arbiter of harm.

Moral authority fails because morality is narrative-dependent. Different moral frameworks produce different verdicts on the same situation. A Catholic moral framework and a utilitarian moral framework reach different conclusions about the same end-of-life scenario. Neither can adjudicate the other. Both claim truth.

The DHP's arbiter is evidence. Not power. Not majority. Not moral framework. Evidence of harm, measured against the three filters, applied in sequence, produces a resolution that is independent of the power of the claimants.

II. The Three Filters — DHP-RESOLVE-001

When two paths both claim to reduce harm, the Truth Mesh applies three filters in sequence. The filters are not advisory. They are deterministic. A path that fails a filter is eliminated. A path that passes all three filters is selected. If both paths pass all three filters at equivalent levels, the conflict escalates to community fork — the nodes most affected by the decision exercise sovereign exit, choosing which path governs their own node.

`FILTER 1` The Reversibility Check

LOGIC:

Path A causes harm that can be undone. Path B causes harm that is permanent — a Critical System Error that deletes a node's future options. The degree of reversibility is the first measurement. A harm that can be repaired is categorically different from a harm that cannot. The destruction of a node's capacity for future choice — through death, permanent injury, irreversible psychological damage, or the elimination of the conditions for agency — represents a qualitatively different level of harm than one that causes suffering but preserves the node's future.

COMMAND:

The Mesh always selects the reversible path. Never choose a path that permanently deletes a node's future options when a path exists that only pauses them.

KILLSHOT:

If Path B's proponents cannot demonstrate that their path preserves reversibility, Path B is eliminated regardless of the strength of their harm claim. Permanence of harm is the single most important variable in the measurement. You cannot undo a dead node.

`FILTER 2` The Agency Weighting

LOGIC:

Path A harms nodes with high agency — nodes with the hardware, information, and freedom to adapt, recover, and choose alternative paths. Path B harms nodes with low or zero agency — children, the severely traumatised, the cognitively impaired, the imprisoned, the economically

destitute, those in coercive relationships. This is not about the number of nodes harmed. It is about the capacity of those nodes to protect themselves from the harm and to recover from it. High-agency nodes have more options. They can exit. They can adapt. They can rebuild. Low-agency nodes cannot.

COMMAND:

The Mesh always protects the node with the least capacity to protect itself. This is not charity. It is system load balancing. You do not put the heaviest weight on the weakest part of the bridge.

`FILTER 3` **The Evidence Audit**

LOGIC:

Group A claims their path will produce outcome X. Group B claims their path will produce outcome Y. The Archivist and Moralist run in synchronisation. What does the historical record show? What happened the last time this type of path was taken under comparable conditions? What does the current observational data show about harm levels in each path? The audit is not a debate. It is a data retrieval. Both groups present their evidence to the Truth Mesh. The Mesh evaluates the quality, transparency, and completeness of the evidence.

COMMAND:

Stop theorising. Look at what the data actually says. What happened last time? What is happening now?

KILLSHOT:

Secrecy equals entropy. If one group is hiding data, refusing to disclose their evidence, operating behind closed doors, or claiming authority without showing their workings — their harm claim is automatically downweighted. Transparency is not optional in the DHP. A group that will not show its Truth Mesh is a group that knows its Truth Mesh would not support its claim. The more transparent a group's evidence, the more weight their harm claim carries. The more opaque, the less. Secrecy is a red flag. It is always a red flag.

III. The Filter Sequence — How to Apply

The three filters are applied in sequence, not simultaneously. A path that fails Filter 1 is eliminated before Filter 2 is applied. This matters because it prevents the situation where a path with catastrophically irreversible harm passes Filter 2 on agency grounds and is then judged primarily on evidence quality. Reversibility is the foundational check. Agency is secondary. Evidence quality is third.

3.1 Filter sequence logic

- Apply Filter 1 — Reversibility. If one path causes irreversible harm and the other does not, select the reversible path. Proceed no further.
- If both paths are similarly reversible, apply Filter 2 — Agency Weighting. If one path primarily harms low-agency nodes and the other does not, select the path that protects low-agency nodes. Proceed no further.

- If both paths have similar agency impact, apply Filter 3 — Evidence Audit. Evaluate the quality and transparency of each group's evidence. The path with stronger, more transparent evidence carries more weight.
- If all three filters produce equivalent results for both paths, the conflict is a genuine values disagreement with similar harm profiles. Escalate to community fork: the nodes most directly affected exercise sovereign exit and choose which path governs their own community.

3.2 The community fork as final resolution

The community fork is not a failure of the protocol. It is the protocol's most important feature. It recognises that some genuine conflicts — where harm profiles are truly equivalent and evidence is genuinely ambiguous — cannot be resolved by a central arbiter without becoming coercive. In these cases, the DHP does not force a single answer. It allows the communities most affected to govern themselves according to their chosen path, with the Survival Floor guaranteed regardless of which path they choose.

This is the Fork mechanism operating at its highest level. No king decides. No majority imposes. The mesh allows diversity of approach where diversity is genuinely safe. It only enforces a single answer where one path demonstrably causes more harm than the other under the three filters.

IV. Applied Examples

The following examples demonstrate DHP-RESOLVE-001 applied to real conflict scenarios. These are not advocacy positions. They are demonstrations of the filter logic.

EXAMPLE 1: Pandemic Response — Lockdown vs Liberty

Scenario: Group A claims lockdown reduces harm by slowing viral spread. Group B claims lockdown causes harm through economic devastation, mental health crisis, and loss of freedom.

Resolution: Filter 1 — Reversibility: Death from viral infection is irreversible. Economic damage and mental health impact are severe but largely reversible over time. Path A (lockdown) causes reversible harm. Path B (no lockdown) risks irreversible harm at scale. Filter 1 favours Path A. Filter 2 — Agency: Viral infection disproportionately kills low-agency nodes — the elderly, the immunocompromised, those without access to medical care. Economic lockdown disproportionately harms low-income nodes. Both paths harm low-agency nodes. Filter 2 is inconclusive — escalate to Filter 3. Filter 3 — Evidence: What does the data show about comparable situations? Transparency of modelling and methodology is required from both groups. The group hiding or selectively presenting epidemiological data has its claim downweighted. Resolution: Determined by evidence quality and transparency. This is the correct resolution — the pandemic debate should have been resolved by data, not by political narrative.

EXAMPLE 2: Child Protection vs Parental Rights

Scenario: Group A (child protection services) claims removal of a child from a home is necessary to prevent harm. Group B (parents) claims removal is itself a harm.

Resolution: Filter 1 — Reversibility: Abuse causes harm that may be irreversible — permanent psychological damage, physical injury, death. Removal causes harm that is painful but reversible — the family can be reunited, the child can be supported, the relationship can be rebuilt. Filter 1 selects

removal when credible evidence of abuse exists. Filter 2 — Agency: The child is a low-agency node by definition — incomplete hardware, no power to exit, dependent on adults for Survival Floor. The child's agency weighting is absolute. Filter 2 confirms Filter 1. Filter 3 — Evidence: What does the evidence of harm in this specific case show? Credible, transparent evidence of harm to the child overrides parental narrative. Resolution: Child protection takes precedence when evidence of harm is credible and the child's agency is absent. This is not a political position — it is the filter logic applied.

EXAMPLE 3: Industrial Development vs Environmental Protection

Scenario: Group A claims the development creates economic value and reduces poverty. Group B claims it causes environmental harm that damages future generations.

Resolution: Filter 1 — Reversibility: Environmental damage of certain types — species extinction, aquifer contamination, climate tipping points — is irreversible. Economic development forgone is recoverable — different development paths can be taken later. Filter 1 strongly disfavours irreversible environmental harm. Filter 2 — Agency: Future generations are the lowest-agency nodes in any decision — they do not yet exist, they cannot consent, they cannot exit. Present poverty is a real and urgent harm to low-agency nodes. Both involve low-agency nodes. Filter 2 is complex. Filter 3 — Evidence: What does the scientific data show about the reversibility and scale of environmental damage? What does economic data show about poverty impact? Transparency of modelling is required. Hidden industry data or suppressed environmental studies are red flags — their claim is downweighted. Resolution: Determined by evidence quality, with a strong prior toward reversibility given Filter 1.

EXAMPLE 4: The Epstein Test

Scenario: A high-power node claims that his interactions with minors were consensual. The minors and their advocates claim harm.

Resolution: Filter 1 — Reversibility: The psychological harm caused to the minors is severe and in many cases irreversible — damage to trust, to self-image, to the capacity for healthy relationships. The harm to the high-power node from accountability is reputational and legal — recoverable. Filter 1 eliminates the high-power node's claim. Filter 2 — Agency: Minors are incomplete nodes. They do not have the hardware to generate valid consent. The claim of consent is architecturally invalid regardless of apparent compliance. Filter 2 eliminates the high-power node's claim. Filter 3 — Evidence: The high-power node used money, legal threats, and institutional relationships to suppress evidence and silence witnesses. Secrecy equals entropy. The suppression of evidence is itself a red flag that downweights the claim to zero. Resolution: All three filters eliminate the claim. This is not a close call under DHP-RESOLVE-001. It was only a close call under the existing system because the existing system resolves conflict through power — and the high-power node had more power. The DHP removes power from the equation.

V. Why This Closes the Loop

The DHP framework has, until this document, contained an unresolved edge case: what happens when two groups both claim harm reduction legitimacy? Without a resolution mechanism, the DHP risks becoming another tool for the powerful to deploy — constructing harm narratives that serve their interests and using the DHP's architecture to legitimise them.

DHP-RESOLVE-001 closes this loop by specifying a tie-breaker that is independent of power. The three filters — reversibility, agency weighting, and evidence audit — are not subject to narrative. They are not determined by the social status of the claimants. They are not overridable by money or force. They measure. They apply. They resolve.

The secrecy killshot in Filter 3 is the most important single mechanism in the document. It is what prevents the powerful from simply hiding their data and claiming victory by default. Opacity is disqualifying. Transparency is load-bearing. A group that will not show its working cannot claim the Truth Mesh supports its position. The mesh requires the evidence to be on the mesh.

With this protocol in place, the complete DHP architecture is:

- DHP-BRIEF-001 — The Survival Floor, the Truth Mesh, the Forking Mechanism. The three-layer architecture.
- DHP-ETHICS-001 — Agency, consent, and the functional model of behaviour. The ethical foundation.
- DHP-REPAIR-001 — The trauma overwrite formula. The healing mechanism.
- DHP-RESOLVE-001 — The conflict resolution protocol. The tie-breaker.

These four documents together constitute a complete, internally consistent framework for human governance at every scale — from individual relationships to global institutions. No king. No central authority. No might-makes-right. Just the filters running on the evidence, the Survival Floor guaranteed, and the Fork preserved.

VI. Summary

DHP-RESOLVE-001 specifies three automated filters for resolving conflicts between competing harm claims:

- Filter 1 — The Reversibility Check: Always select the path that preserves future options. Never choose irreversible harm when a reversible alternative exists.
- Filter 2 — The Agency Weighting: Always protect the node with the least capacity to protect itself. System load balancing, not charity.
- Filter 3 — The Evidence Audit: Stop theorising and look at the data. Transparency is load-bearing. Secrecy is disqualifying.

Applied in sequence, these filters produce a deterministic resolution to any conflict between harm claims. Where all three filters produce equivalent results, the community fork applies — the nodes most affected exercise sovereign exit and govern themselves.

Power is not the tie-breaker. Evidence is. This is the final piece of the DHP architecture. The loop is closed.

References

Rawls, J. (1971). A Theory of Justice. Harvard University Press.

Sen, A. (2009). The Idea of Justice. Harvard University Press.

Sunstein, C.R. (2005). Laws of Fear: Beyond the Precautionary Principle. Cambridge University Press.

Ostrom, E. (1990). Governing the Commons: The Evolution of Institutions for Collective Action. Cambridge University Press.

Habermas, J. (1984). The Theory of Communicative Action. Beacon Press.

Doel, L. (2025). DHP-BRIEF-001: The Dynamic Harm Principle. Unpublished framework.

Doel, L. (2025). DHP-ETHICS-001: Agency, Consent, and the Functional Model of Human Behaviour. Unpublished framework.

Doel, L. (2025). DHP-REPAIR-001: The Trauma Overwrite Formula. Unpublished framework.